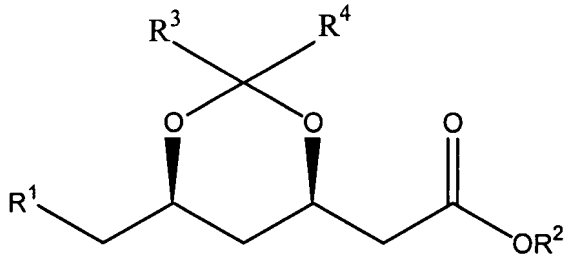
Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

Please amend claims 1, 5, 6, 8, 10 and 11 as indicated.

Claim 1 (currently amended): A process for the preparation of an ester of formula (1),



(1)

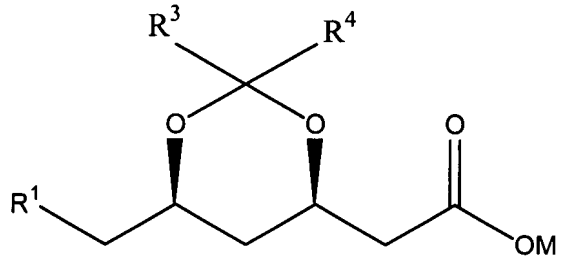
wherein

$\mathbf{R^1}$ represents a leaving group, CN, OH or a $COOR^5$ group;~~,~~

$\mathbf{R^3}$ and $\mathbf{R^4}$ each independently represent a 1-3C ~~1-3 C-~~alkyl group;~~,~~ and

R^2 ~~COOR²~~ and R^5 ~~COOR⁵~~ each independently represent a 1-6C alkyl group or 6-12C aryl group ~~an ester residue~~,

comprising contacting the corresponding compound ~~salt~~ of formula (2),



(2)

wherein

M represents H or an alkali or alkaline earth metal, ~~metal~~

with an acid chloride forming agent in an inert solvent to form the corresponding acid chloride, and contacting the acid chloride with an alcohol of formula R^2OH in the presence of N-methyl-morpholine.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein M represents an alkali metal.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein R^2 represents an alkyl group.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The process according to claim 3, wherein R^2 represents a t-butyl group.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The process according to claim 1, wherein the acid chloride forming agent is oxalyl chloride ~~oxalylchloride~~.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The process according to claim 1, wherein the acid chloride formation is performed in the presence of a catalyst selected from the group consisting of dimethylformamide (DMF) and N-methylpyrrolidone (NMP).

Claim 7 (previously presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the amount of alcohol of formula R^2OH is between 3 and 6 equivalents calculated with respect to the amount of salt with formula (2).

Claim 8 (currently amended): The process according to claim 1, wherein

~~first~~ the compound ~~salt~~ of formula (2) is converted into the corresponding acid chloride and

subsequently, ~~subsequently~~ the acid chloride is contacted with the alcohol of formula

R^2OH and N-methyl-morpholine.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The process according to claim 8, wherein the acid chloride is quenched with the alcohol of formula R^2OH and N-methyl-morpholine.

Claim 10 (currently amended): The process according to claim 1, further comprising converting the ester of formula (1) wherein R^1 represents a leaving group, ~~and wherein the ester of formula (1) is subsequently converted~~ into the corresponding ester of formula (1) wherein R^1 represents an acyloxy group.

Claim 11 (currently amended): The process according to claim 10, wherein

~~first~~ the ester of formula (1), ~~1~~ wherein R^1 represents an acyloxy group, ~~group~~ is prepared and

subsequently, ~~subsequently~~ the ester of formula (1) is converted into the corresponding compound with formula (1) ~~1~~ wherein R^1 represents OH.